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FURTHER EVIDENCE FOR MIGRATION OF BIRDS OF NORTHERN GUINEA SAVANNA

by M. A. Macdonald

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The evidence for seasonal movements in birds of northern Guinea savanna at Mole National Park, Ghana (09°16'N, 01°51'W) has been compiled by Greig-Smith (1977) and supplemented by Taylor & Macdonald (1978). This note adds comments on the phenomenon, based on general comparisons between my two visits to the Park in April 1976 (end of the dry season) and 3-10 January 1978 (middle of the dry season). In each visit the duration and the effort expended in the field were comparable. This paper should be read in conjunction with Taylor & Macdonald (1978); communication problems prevented the two papers being published together.

The evidence for movements in the following species supplements Greig-Smith's conclusions (1977):

GREY-BREASTED HELMET GUINEA-FOWL Numida meleagris In April 1976 it was abundant in both orchard bush and riverine forest. In January 1978 only one flock was seen in orchard bush, but it was abundant in riverine forest at Lovi. Either the wet-season influx described by Greig-Smith begins before the end of the dry season, or major inter-habitat movements are involved.

BROWN-NECKED PARROT Poicephalus robustus Regular in April, not recorded in January. The apparent seasonality in this and the next species (both frugivores) may be due to local movements.

SENEGAL LONG-TAILED PARAKEET Psittacula krameri Regular in small numbers in April, very common in January.

RUFOUS-CROWNED ROLLER Coracias naevia Not recorded in April, singles regular in January.

BLUE-BELLIED ROLLER C. cyanogaster Regular in April; not recorded in January although one was seen near Techiman (07°39'N) on 10 Jan. Described as migrants by Greig-Smith, these observations suggest that the seasons of Blue-bellied and Rufous-crowned Rollers at Mole are wholly or partly separate. The Abyssinian Roller C. abyssinica was common on both visits.

BROAD-BILLED ROLLER Eurystomus glaucurus Common in April, small numbers in January. Described by Greig-Smith as wholly migrant, present only in the wet season. This is evidently not always so.

BEARDED BARBET Lybius dubius Common in April, only two recorded in January. Described by Greig-Smith as resident, and not listed as migratory by Elgood et al. (1973). Frugivorous, so local movements may be involved.

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE Corvinella corvina Common in April but distinctly scarce in January. Described by Greig-Smith as resident, by Moreau (1966) as migrant, while Elgood et al. (1973) found no evidence for migration.

RED-SHOULDERED CUCKOO-SHRIKE Campophaga phoenicea Common in April but scarce in January, which suggests that the wet-season influx described by Greig-Smith in fact occurs before the end of the dry season.

PARADISE FLYCATCHER Terpsiphone viridis Common in April, only two (together) seen in January. I conclude the same as for C. phoenicea.

SPARROW WEAVER Plocepasser superciliosus Scarce in April, abundant in January. Not previously suggested to migrate.

We have suggested that dry-season emigration occurred in several other species (Taylor & Macdonald 1978), of which the following corroborations were made in January 1978. Suggestions of a general dry-season emigration were supported for Spur-winged Goose Plectropterus gambensis (none seen), Mourning Dove Streptopelia decipiens (one only), Pygmy Kingfisher Ceyx picta (one only), Senegal Wood-hoopoe Phoeniculus purpureus (two groups), Lesser Wood-hoopoe P. aterrimus (none), Brubru Nilaus afer (one only), Snowy-crowned Robin-chat Cossypha niveicapilla (one, greatly outnumbered by C. albicapilla), West African Penduline Tit Remiz parvulus (one group) and Senegal Fire-finch Lagonosticta senegalae (none).

A late dry-season emigration was suggested by January observations of the following species which were rare or unrecorded in April: Stone Partridge Ptilopachus petrosus (regular), Red-billed Wood Dove Turtur afer (regular in riverine forest), Greater Honey-guide Indicator indicator (two seen), Long-crested Helmet-Shrike Prionops plumata (three groups), Pale Flycatcher Bradornis pallidus (common) and Little Bunting Emberiza forbesi (two separate pairs).

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